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TALES OF HORROR

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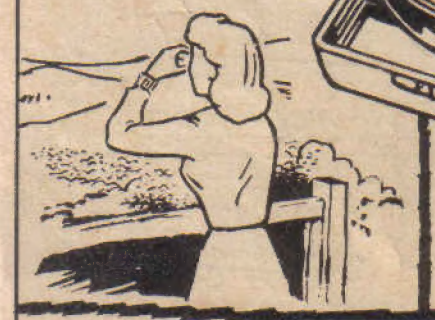

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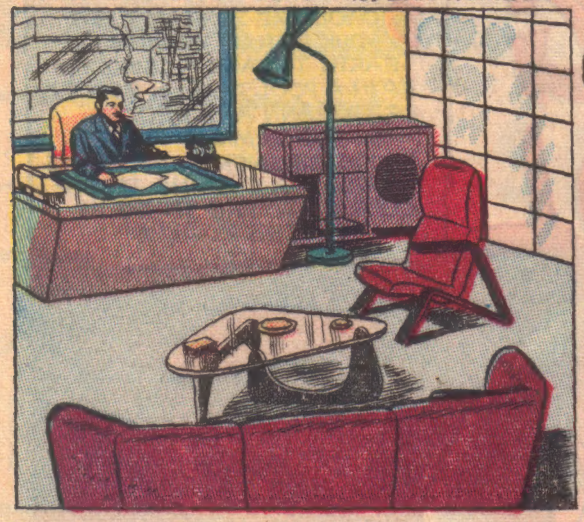
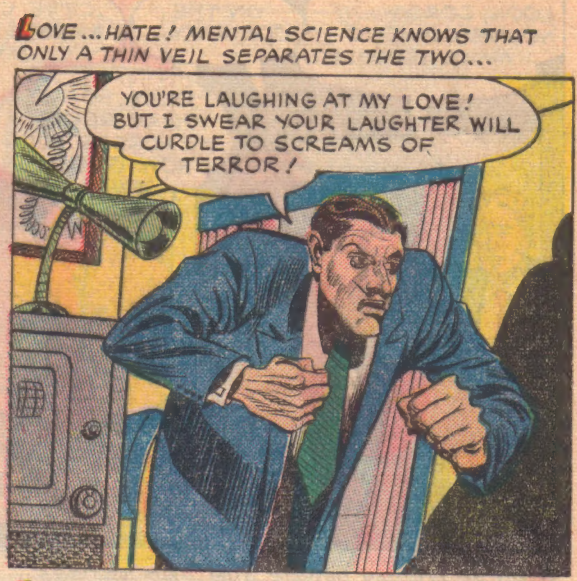
THE THING IN THE POOL
DO YOU LIKE TO SWIM? IS IT YOUR IDEA OF HEAVEN ON EARTH TO TAKE A LEISURELY DIP IN A POOL? WELL, DON'T! OR, LIKE ANN AND GEORGE WINSOR, YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF ENSNARLED IN THE WRIGGLING, CHOKING TENTACLES OF... 'THE THING IN THE POOL'!
Myron Fass

THE OFFICE-RESIDENCE OF SEBASTIAN CORDAY, FAMED BUILDER OF ULTRA-MODERN HOMES...



CORDAY IS IN AN ILL HUMOR WHEN...

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, ANN! YOUR BOSS IS NUTTIER THAN A PEANUT BAR!
I'M SORRY THIS HAPPENED, GEORGE.


LOVE...HATE! MENTAL SCIENCE KNOWS THAT ONLY A THIN VEIL SEPARATES THE TWO...
YOU'RE LAUGHING AT MY LOVE! BUT I SWEAR YOUR LAUGHTER WILL CURDLE TO SCREAMS OF TERROR!

I'LL MAKE THEM SUFFER! THE INGENIOUS BRAIN OF SEBASTIAN CORDAY WILL DEVISE THE MEANS!

ANN AND GEORGE TRIED TO FORGET THE EPISODE... AN EASY TASK, FOR THEY WERE FULL OF THEIR NEW-FOUND HAPPINESS...

A YEAR LATER...
THIS LITTLE FLAT ISN'T EXACTLY THE PALACE I PROMISED YOU SOMEDAY, ANN...
IT'S BETTER THAN A PALACE TO ME, GEORGE.
RING!

SEBASTIAN CORDAY!

LOOK, CORDAY... IF YOU'VE COME TO MAKE TROUBLE...
ON THE CONTRARY...
...I'VE COME TO MAKE AMENDS! I REGRET MY BOORISH TANTRUM...
OKAY, SO YOU'RE SORRY! WE FORGIVE YOU... NOW GOOD-BYE!
NO! YOU MUST LET ME PROVE HOW GENUINE MY REMORSE IS. COME WITH ME... I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR BOTH OF YOU!
WELL, I DON'T KNOW...
AND AS CORDAY DRIVES ANN AND GEORGE WINSOR INTO CANYON COUNTRY...
WHAT IS THIS SURPRISE ??
I DON'T WANT TO SPOIL THE PLEASURE OF YOUR ANTICIPATION!
BEHOLD... THE ACME OF MY ARCHITECTURAL ART... A MAGNIFICENT TRIUMPH!
MIGHTY IMPRESSIVE! BUT WHAT HAS THIS TO DO WITH ANN AND ME?
IT'S ALL YOURS !!
SURELY YOU DON'T MEAN YOU'RE GIVING US THIS MANSION! IT MUST HAVE COST A FORTUNE!
YOU COULDN'T !!
I INSIST!!

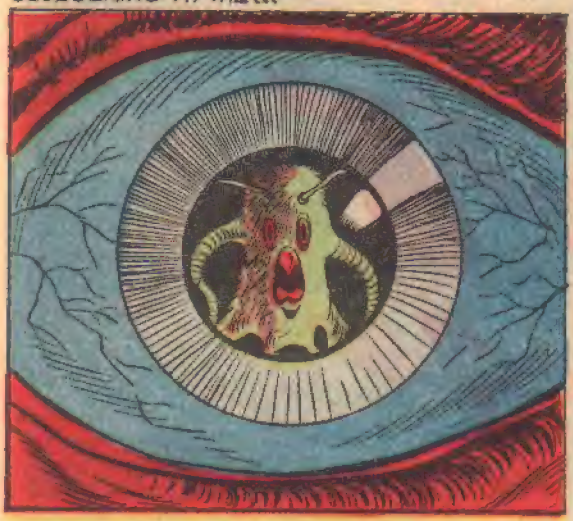
NOT THE LEAST OF THE SPECTACULAR FEATURES OF MY CREATION IS THE INDOOR SWIMMING POOL!
ALL OURS! I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS !!
YOU HAVE THE KEY AND THE DEED... ENJOY!
IT'S A WONDERFUL DREAM! AND I THOUGHT CORDAY A CRUEL MONSTER !!
WHAT A POOL !!
A FEW NIGHTS LATER...
GEORGE! THAT GHASTLY SCREAM!
IT SOUNDS LIKE OUR HANDYMAN, KEETO!
EE-AGH
EEE-YAAAA
ANN! WAIT FOR ME!
SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS HAPPENING TO HIM!
OH, NO! NO-O-O! UH-H-H!
ANN! ANN! WHERE'S KEETO? WHAT HAPPENED?
IT WAS HORRIBLE! AN UNSPEAKABLE TENTACLED THING...DRAGGING HIM DOWN INTO THE POOL!
AND WHEN THE LAW ARRIVES...
KEETO'S DISAPPEARED, ALL RIGHT... BUT AS TO YOUR STORY ABOUT A MONSTER...
... AN OBVIOUS HALLUCINATION!

SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER...
THAT "HALLUCINATION" WAS SO REAL, I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO SLEEP IN THIS HOUSE!
TRY TO FORGET IT, DEAR!
FORGET? ...THOSE SLIMY TENTACLES ...BEADY EYES! AND THE WAY "IT" STARED AT ME!
PLEASE TRY TO SLEEP, ANN. YOU'RE JUST UPSETTING YOURSELF NEEDLESSLY. REMEMBER... I HAVE A GUN!
I GUESS I AM BEING FOOLISH... I'LL TRY!
LATER, GEORGE AWAKENS...
UGH! WHAT A HORRIBLE ODOR!
BANG! BANG!
IT'S THE THING ANN DESCRIBED! SHE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH!
BULLETS...DON'T ...STOP...IT!

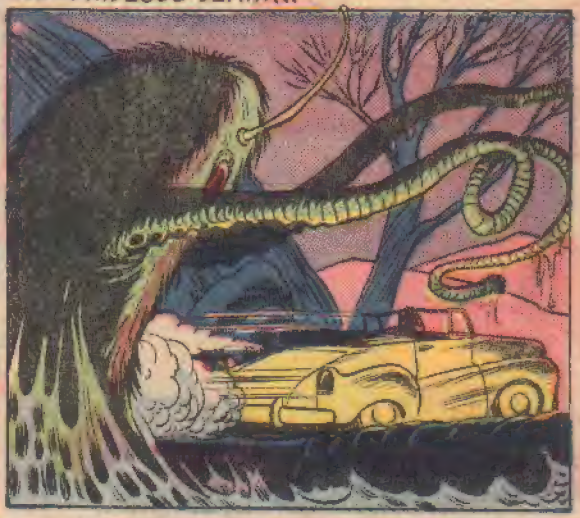
DESPERATELY GEORGE PURSUES THE THING AND HIS CAPTIVE BRIDE...
GEORGE! GEORGE! HELP ME!
IT'S CARRYING HER ...INTO... THE POOL!
HELP! HELP! EEE-YAAA... (GURGLE!)
IT DRAGGED HER UNDER!
I'M COMING, ANN!
AGAIN AND AGAIN GEORGE DIVES FOR HIS BRIDE, SEARCHING IN VAIN...
POLICE... GOT TO CALL... THE POLICE!
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY !!

SEBASTIAN CORDAY! THANK GOODNESS...!GASP!...YOU'RE HERE! LET ME...!GASP!...TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT!
LET ME TELL YOU!
YOUR PRECIOUS BRIDE IS DEAD... DESTROYED BY A GHASTLY MONSTER OUT OF THAT POOL!
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
BECAUSE I PLANNED IT THAT WAY!!
YOU TRUSTING FOOL! DID YOU THINK I WOULD LET YOU STEAL THE GIRL I LOVED AND NOT PLAN REVENGE?
BUT WHAT POSSIBLE CONNECTION COULD YOU HAVE WITH THAT THING IN THE POOL?
A YEAR AGO, WHEN ANN JILTED ME, I DROVE OUT TO THIS SECTION OF CANYON COUNTRY AND PARKED, BY CHANCE, NEAR THIS POOL!
"...AND AS I WAS PARKED IN THE NIGHT, DEEP IN THOUGHT, UNDULATING TENTACLES REACHED TOWARD MY THROAT..."

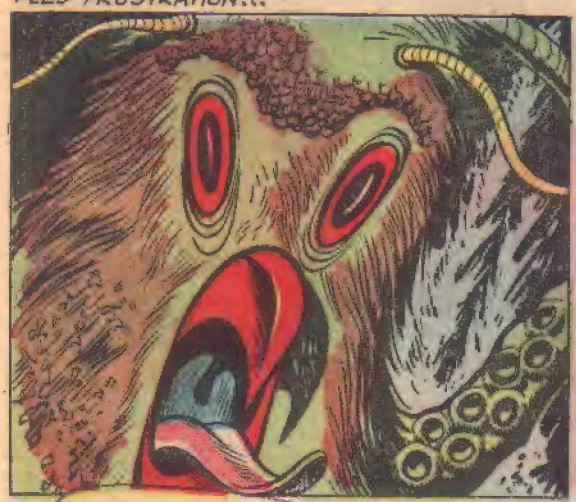
"...I GLANCED UP TO A NIGHTMARISH HORROR SLOBBERING AT ME..."



"...I STEPPED ON THE GAS... NARROWLY ESCAPING A HIDEOUS DEATH..."



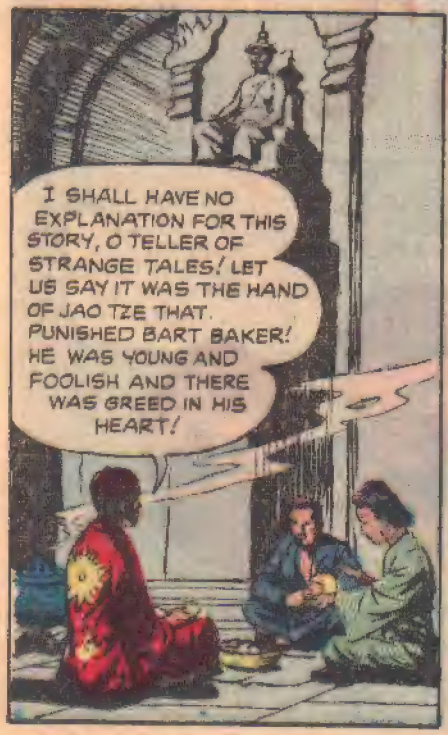
"...THE SLIMY BEAST SHRIEKED ITS ANGER...ITS RED MAW GNASHING OPEN AND SHUT IN BAFFLED FRUSTRATION..."



"...AND AS I WATCHED FROM A SAFE DISTANCE, THE THING SCUTTLED BACK INTO THE SHELTERING DEPTHS OF THE POOL!"

YOU DELIBERATELY PLANNED ALL THIS? YOU FILTHY COWARD...
YES...HA, HA! DELIBERATELY!
ANN WAS DESTROYED... AND NOW ITS YOUR TURN!
YAA-AAA!
HA! HA! THE REVENGE OF SEBASTIAN CORDAY!
HA, HA, HAAA-AA! AGHH-H ?!!
NO! NOT ME! NOT ME! EEE-EE-EE-AAAA !!
FOR SALE, CHEAP... AN ULTRA-MODERN MANSION WHOSE OCCUPANTS HAVE MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED!
FOR SALE
ARE YOU INTERESTED? ? IF SO, DROP IN !
THE END

The HAND of JAO TZE



"WHATEVER FAULTS BART BAKER HAD, FEAR WAS NOT ONE OF THEM! DEVIL-MAY-CARE AND TWO-FISTED...HE WAS ALWAYS READY FOR A LARK OR A FIGHT..
AHOY! A PRETTY GIRL IN DISTRESS!
SORRY, MATEY! I CAN'T RESIST A GOOD FIGHT!
A KNIFE, EH? WELL, THE STEEL THAT CAN HURT BART BAKER HASN'T BEEN MADE YET!
THERE THEY GO!.. RIVER RATS...AFRAID TO FIGHT ONE MAN... BUT BRAVE AGAINST A GIRL!
I AM THANKFUL FOR THAT, SIR! YOU HAVE SAVED MY LIFE... AND MY FATHER A GREAT DEAL OF SORROW!
THE PLEASURE HAS BEEN MINE, MISS! BUT WHAT DID THEY WANT OF YOU?
I AM MORNING BLOSSOM, DAUGHTER OF THE KEEPER OF THE TEMPLE OF JAO TZE! THEY WANTED TO HOLD ME FOR RANSOM!
THEY MUST HAVE BEEN FOOLS! TEMPLE KEEPERS ARE POOR! DON'T TELL ME YOUR FATHER IS DIFFERENT!
NO. WE, TOO, ARE POOR. BUT THE STATUE OF JAO TZE HAS PRICELESS JEWELS ...AND THEY WANTED TO FORCE MY FATHER TO STEAL THEM!
2

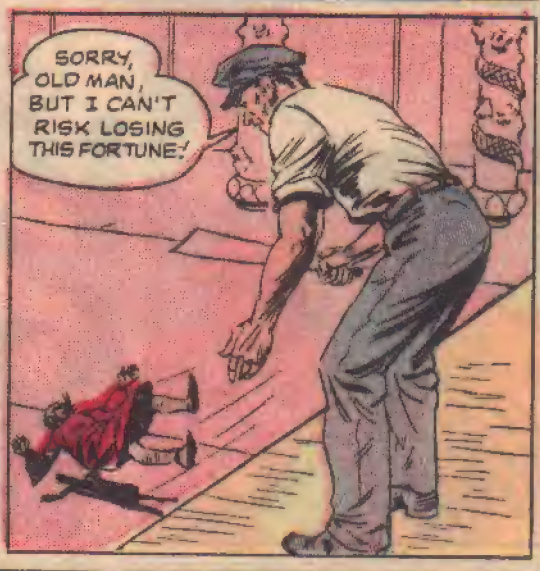
"JEWELS...A FORTUNE SO NEAR! THE THOUGHT OF IT SUDDENLY SENT THE BLOOD RACING THROUGH BART'S BODY..."
WILL YOU COME IN WITH ME, BART? MY FATHER WOULD WANT TO THANK YOU!
MORNING BLOSSOM... YOUR SMILE IS THANKS ENOUGH FOR ME!
COME! I WILL SHOW YOU THE JEWELS OF JAO TZE! YOU SHALL SEE THE TREASURE YOU SAVED IN SAVING ME!
I SAW ONLY A GIRL IN NEED OF HELP, MORNING BLOSSOM! I WASN'T THINKING OF ANY TREASURE!
LOOK, MY FRIEND! I SEE DIAMONDS... RUBIES... OTHER JEWELS! BUT THOSE ARE NOT THE TREASURE OF THIS TEMPLE!
YOU ARE THE REAL TREASURE HERE! THE IDOL HAS ONLY JEWELS ... BUT YOU ARE BEAUTY AND GOODNESS, MORNING BLOSSOM! IF THERE WERE A TREASURE HERE I WOULD WANT TO STEAL, IT WOULD BE YOU!
NOT MANY HAVE SUCH WISDOM AT YOUR YOUNG AGE, MY FRIEND! BUT YOU SPEAK A GREAT TRUTH! IF ONLY MORE MEN KNEW WHAT TRUE VALUE IS!
SO YOU SAIL SOON? WILL YOU STOP WITH US AGAIN ON YOUR WAY BACK DOWN THE RIVER? YOU MUST CONSIDER OUR HUMBLE HOME YOUR HOME... FOR MY DAUGHTER AND I OWE YOU MUCH!
I WILL COME BACK AGAIN... FOR I WANT TO SEE MORNING BLOSSOM!
YOU WILL NOT FORGET ME? YOU WILL COME BACK?
I WILL COME, MORNING BLOSSOM... FOR I LOVE YOU!
3

I LOVE YOU, TOO, BART BAKER!
IS THERE ANOTHER WAY INTO THIS TEMPLE, MORNING BLOSSOM? I WOULD NOT WANT TO COME IN THROUGH THE MAIN ENTRANCE!
THIS IS THE KEY TO OUR LIVING QUARTERS IN BACK OF THE TEMPLE, BART.
I WILL USE IT TO COME TO VISIT YOU AND YOUR FATHER! GOOD-BY!
BEHIND THE SWEET WORDS BART WHISPERED INTO THE GIRL'S EARS, GREED AND TREACHERY SMOULDERED WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT...
MY LITTLE SWEETHEART... I'M GOING TO VISIT THE TEMPLE TONIGHT... NOW!
THEY WON'T BE EXPECTING ANY VISITORS! THIS SHOULD BE EASY!
"HIS SKILL AS A SEAMAN ENABLED BART TO CLIMB UP THE GREAT STONE FIGURE...
NICE OF THEM TO HAVE THIS SWORD HANDY! JUST WHAT I NEED TO PRY THE JEWELS LOOSE!
LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY!
GIVE UP THIS FORTUNE? I'M NO FOOL, OLD MAN! STAND BACK!
WE DID NOT EXPECT TREACHERY FROM YOU, BART BAKER! YOU CAME TO US AS A FRIEND! SORROW IS ON ME FOR THE EVIL THAT WAS IN YOUR KIND WORDS! GIVE ME BACK THE JEWELS OF JAO TZE!
4

RETURN THE JEWELS BEFORE THE WRATH OF JAO TZE REACHES OUT FOR YOU!
I'M GOING! DON'T TRY TO STOP ME!

I WILL NOT LET YOU PASS...
I WARNED YOU! NOW, I SHALL HAVE TO GET RID OF YOU! YOU KNOW TOO MUCH!

I WILL HAVE NO WITNESSES TO TELL THE POLICE, OLD MAN!
JAO TZE IS A WITNESS... HE IS TOO POWERFUL FOR YOU TO DESTROY!


SORRY, OLD MAN, BUT I CAN'T RISK LOSING THIS FORTUNE!

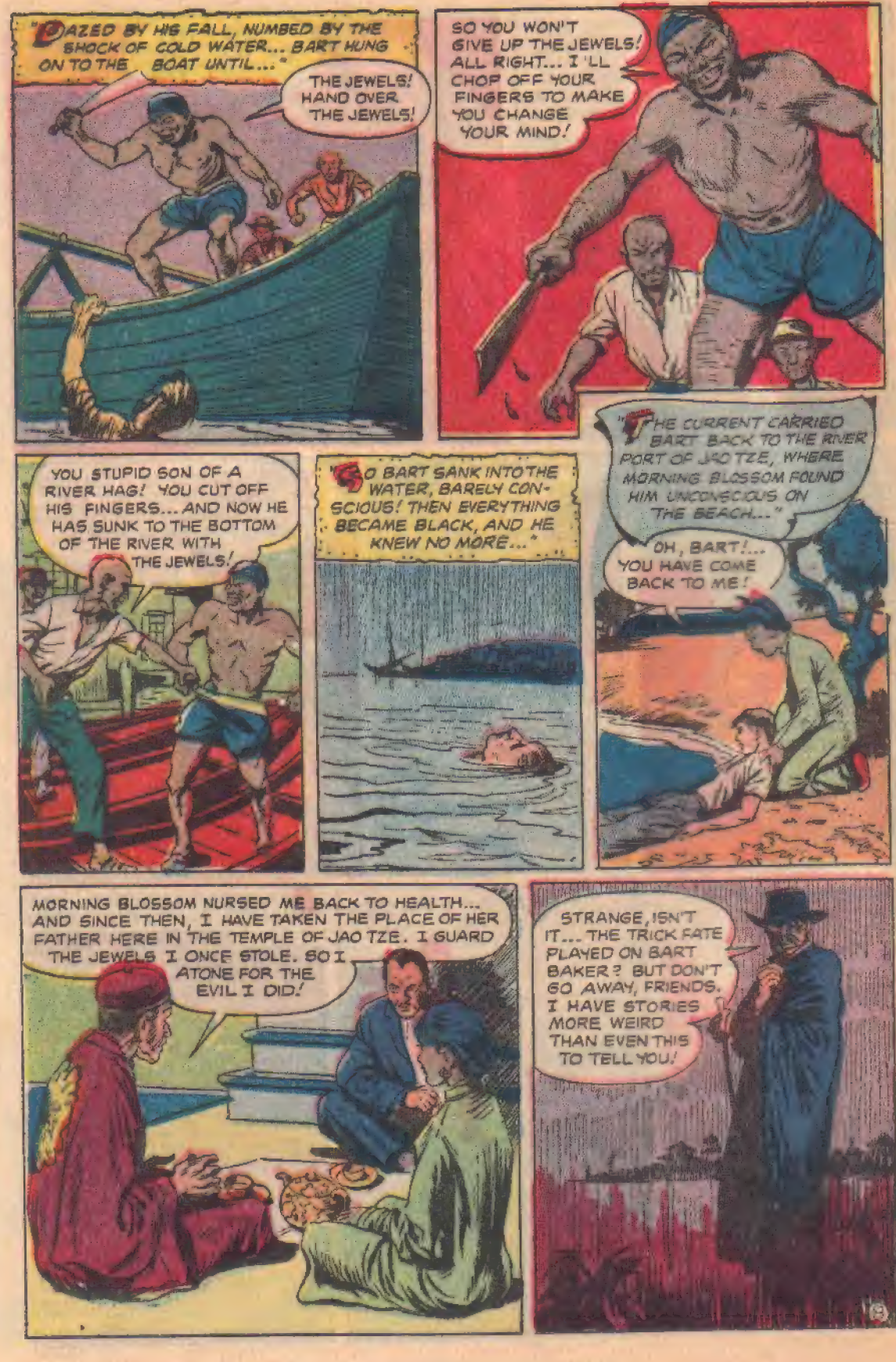
NICE OF YOU TO PROVIDE ME WITH AN EASY WAY OF GETTING OUT!

NOW I HOPE I CAN MAKE THE SHIP BEFORE SHE SAILS!

LET GO THE LINES! THAT LUNATIC MATE OF MINE IS ABOARD!

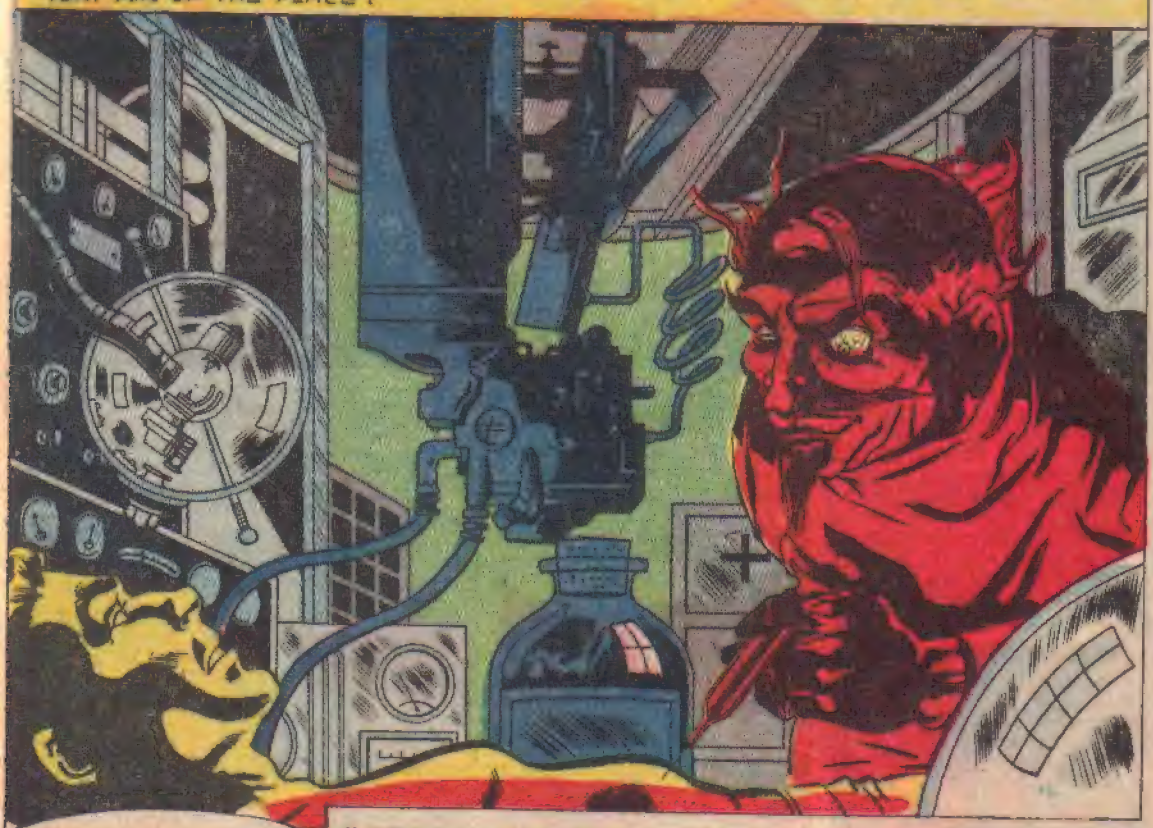
AND WHERE THE DEVIL WERE YOU? MAKING ME WAIT TWO HOURS FOR YOU! OH-HO! IS THAT BLOOD I SEE ON YOUR HANDS?
BLOOD? OH, YES... YES... I GOT INTO A BIT OF A FIGHT!
A BIT OF A FIGHT? HA! WORD AND RUMOR MOVE FAST ON THE RIVER HWANG HO! FASTER THAN YOU WERE ABLE TO SNEAK BACK TO THE DOCKS ...WORD SPREAD THAT THE JEWELS OF JAO TZE HAVE BEEN STOLEN!
WHAT? BUT HOW... WHO..."
I'M PUTTING TWO AND TWO TOGETHER, BART! YE DID IT... AND I WANT HALF!
HALF YOU WANT?
YOU CAN HAVE ALL OF THIS... MY FIST!
"WITH SWIFT, POWERFUL STROKES, BART SWAM SHOREWARD TOWARD THE RIVER PORT THAT LOOMED OUT OF THE SHADOWY RIVER BANK..."
MADE IT! A FORTUNE IN MY POUCH... AND NOT A PENNY IN MY POCKET! I'LL HAVE TO SELL ONE OF THE STONES FOR MONEY TO GET ME TO THE SEACOAST
THIS LOOKS LIKE A PLACE WHERE THEY'LL BUY A DIAMOND AND WON'T ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS! ESPECIALLY IF THEY CAN CHEAT ME ON THE PRICE! I GUESS I CAN AFFORD TO PART WITH ONE JEWEL...

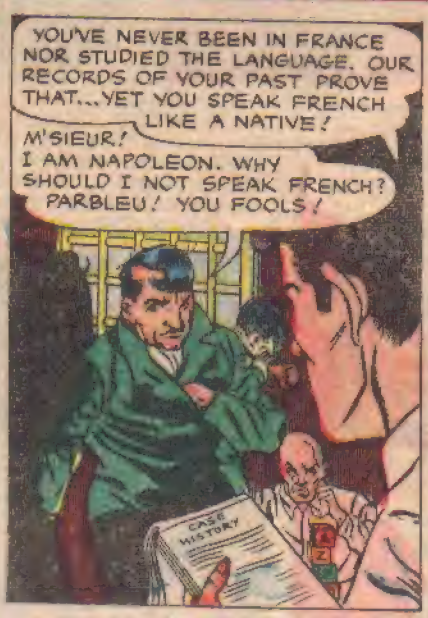
I WANT TO SELL A JEWEL. I'LL TAKE CASH ... AND NO QUESTIONS!
LET ME SEE THIS JEWEL FIRST! I WILL ASK NO QUESTIONS, SIR. I AM NOT CURIOUS.
HERE IT IS... NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE! IMPOSSIBLE!
A FINGER! HIS FINGER!
A FINGER? IS THAT THE NAME OF THIS JEWEL? HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR IT?
KEEP IT! KEEP IT!
STRANGE! PERHAPS HE HAS MORE GEMS IN THAT POUCH OF HIS! IT IS WORTH LOOKING INTO!
THAT MADMAN HAS A FORTUNE IN PRECIOUS STONES! GET HIM... BEFORE SOMEONE ELSE CUTS HIS THROAT FOR THOSE JEWELS!
THAT MERCHANT PLAYED SOME TRICK ON ME! NOW HE'S GOT MEN AFTER ME TO GET THE REST OF MY JEWELS!
I'LL LOSE THEM ON THE RIVER, THEN. I'LL GO BACK AND TAKE CARE OF THAT THIEF OF A STORE KEEPER!
"BUT RUNNING THROUGH THE DARK AND FOG, BART'S FOOT TRIPPED AND..."

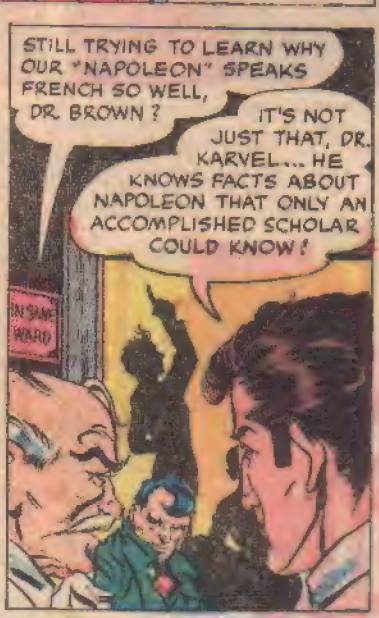

"DAZED BY HIS FALL, NUMBED BY THE SHOCK OF COLD WATER... BART HUNG ON TO THE BOAT UNTIL..."
THE JEWELS! HAND OVER THE JEWELS!
SO YOU WON'T GIVE UP THE JEWELS! ALL RIGHT... I'LL CHOP OFF YOUR FINGERS TO MAKE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND!
YOU STUPID SON OF A RIVER HAG! YOU CUT OFF HIS FINGERS... AND NOW HE HAS SUNK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER WITH THE JEWELS!
"SO BART SANK INTO THE WATER, BARELY CONSCIOUS! THEN EVERYTHING BECAME BLACK, AND HE KNEW NO MORE..."
"THE CURRENT CARRIED BART BACK TO THE RIVER PORT OF JAO TZE, WHERE MORNING BLOSSOM FOUND HIM UNCONSCIOUS ON THE BEACH..."
OH, BART!... YOU HAVE COME BACK TO ME!
MORNING BLOSSOM NURSED ME BACK TO HEALTH... AND SINCE THEN, I HAVE TAKEN THE PLACE OF HER FATHER HERE IN THE TEMPLE OF JAO TZE. I GUARD THE JEWELS I ONCE STOLE. SO I ATONE FOR THE EVIL I DID!
STRANGE, ISN'T IT... THE TRICK FATE PLAYED ON BART BAKER? BUT DON'T GO AWAY, FRIENDS. I HAVE STORIES MORE WEIRD THAN EVEN THIS TO TELL YOU!

THE RIPPER'S RETURN

THE OUTSIDE WORLD CALLED IT A "REST HOME". INSIDE IT WAS A HOUSE OF HORROR! SICK, DEMENTED BEINGS WANDERED ABOUT THE WEIRD GLOOMY ROOMS... TERROR LURKED BEHIND EACH DOOR... AND SOME STRANGE, FEARFUL OFFSPRING OF SCIENCE CHILLED THE VERY AIR OF THE PLACE!







AND...? CAN YOU EXPLAIN HIS STRANGE KNOWLEDGE?
I THINK SO, SIR. WE CALL HIM CRAZY, BUT...SUPPOSE THE SPIRIT OF NAPOLEON HAS ENTERED HIS BODY?
TALKING LIKE THAT, DR. BROWN, MAY SOON MAKE YOU A PATIENT!
EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT SOMEHOW LONG DEAD SPIRITS HAVE ENTERED THE BODIES OF OUR PATIENTS, DOCTOR! COME...SEE THE MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF CONFUCIUS...
OH, WISE TEACHER, WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE IN LIFE?
THREE THINGS, MY SON! FOOD...CLOTHING ...SHELTER! WITHOUT THESE CAN BE NO LIFE!
ANYONE CAN QUOTE CONFUCIUS! THIS PROVES NOTHING
NO, DR. KARVEL! THAT QUOTATION COMES FROM A MANUSCRIPT DISCOVERED ONLY THREE MONTHS AGO. I CHECKED PROFESSOR ADAMS OF THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM... HE ALONE HAS READ IT!
I HAVE NO DOUBTS, DOCTOR. I'M GOING TO ANNOUNCE MY DISCOVERY. PERHAPS OTHERS HAVE OBSERVED SIMILAR THINGS ABOUT THE INSANE!
I FEAR I CANNOT PERMIT YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT, DR. BROWN!
BUT WHY...? YOU DOING?
DR. KARVEL! WHAT ARE
I'M STOPPING YOUR INTERFERENCE WITH MY WORK, BROWN! YOUR DISCOVERY IS VERY UNFORTUNATE...FOR YOU!
I'LL SHOW YOU MY LABORATORY, BROWN...I'M SURE YOU WILL APPRECIATE MY WORK! BUT ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF YOUR DISCOVERY WOULD DETRACT FROM THE CREDIT AND HONOR DUE TO ME... TO ME ALONE!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, DR. KARVEL.
QUITE SIMPLE, REALLY! I HAVE DISCOVERED HOW TO COLLECT THE TINY BRAIN ATOMS OF PERSONS LONG DEAD... AND HOW TO INSERT THEM IN LIVING PEOPLE. A LIVING PERSON MAY BECOME SOMEONE ELSE...SOMEONE DEAD FOR CENTURIES!
THEN... THEN OUR PATIENTS REALLY AREN'T CRAZY!!

WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO, DR. KARVEL?
TO PROTECT MY SECRET, BROWN... GET ON THIS TABLE!
I'M GOING TO CHANGE YOUR MIND. WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE HENRY THE EIGHTH?... HITLER?...AH! YOU SHALL BE JACK THE RIPPER!
YOU'RE MAD, KARVEL! I'M...
YOU'RE GOING TO STOP BEING DR. JASON BROWN ...AND BECOME JACK THE RIPPER! IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS...
NO! NO! STOP IT, KARVEL! DON'T DESTROY ME... PLEASE!
...IN A FEW MOMENTS YOU WILL HAVE THE MIND OF JACK THE RIPPER...AND POOR DR. BROWN WILL BE A PATIENT... VICTIM OF OVERWORK!
WELL, JACK, HOW DO YOU FEEL?
BLIMEY, GUV'NOR! H'I GOT A BLOOMIN' 'EADACHE! WHERE MIGHT H'I BE?
YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE, JACK. IT'S A GOOD PLACE ... PLENTY OF FOOD, AND...
HIT SOUNDS LIKE H'A BLINKIN' JAIL, GUV'NOR! H'I DON'T LIKE H'IT MUCH H'I DON'T!
H'I'M GETTIN' OUT OF 'ERE IF YER DON'T MIND! 'ERE! 'ERE! WOT'RE YER DOIN' WITH THAT BUTTON, GUV'NOR?!
JUST CALLING SOME ATTENDANTS TO TAKE YOU TO A NICE COMFORTABLE ROOM, JACK!

H'I'LL NOT BE COMFORTABLE IN JAIL GUV'NOR.
LET GO, JACK... I WON'T HARM YOU...
YER WON'T BE 'URTING ME, GUV'NOR, NEVER YE FEAR! HIT'S YOU WOT'S GOT CAUSE TO WORRY! JACK THE RIPPER KNOWS 'OW TO 'ANDLE 'IS H'ENEMIES, 'E DOES!
NO! NO! YOU'RE JASON BROWN! LET ME EXPL...
DR. BROWN!... HE'S KILLED DR. KARVEL!
GRAB HIM! HE'S GONE OUT OF HIS MIND!
CALM DOWN, DR. BROWN! WE WON'T HURT ME JUST BE CALM!
YER A FOOL, MAN! JACK THE RIPPER'S MY NAME!... AN' TAKE YER BLOOMIN' CLAWS OFF ME!
WE FOUND HIM LIKE THAT, DR. SMITH... CLEAR OUT OF HIS HEAD... AND STANDING OVER DR. KARVEL'S BODY.
A PITY, POOR MAN! DR. BROWN WAS A BRILLIANT MAN... HE WAS OVERWORKED, I GUESS!
H'I'M NOT LOONY, H'I TELLS YER! H'I'M JACK THE RIPPER!
IT LOOKS HOPELESS. I SUPPOSE HE'LL JOIN THE INCURABLES WITH "NAPOLEON" AND "CONFUCIUS".
JUST A STORY, MY FRIEND... JUST A STORY! BUT WHO KNOWS...? PERHAPS SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO GO AROUND CLAIMING THEY ARE NAPOLEON... OR GEORGE WASHINGTON... ARE JUST WHAT THEY CLAIM! SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, EH? AND TO CHILL YOUR SPINE, EH? BUT LINGER A WHILE... I HAVE MORE STORIES TO MYSTIFY YOU!
REST WELL SANITARIUM

LOVE from a PLANT

CAN A PLANT *LOVE?* CAN IT *HATE?* IS THE POSSIBILITY OF A PLANT EXPERIENCING HUMAN EMOTION UTTERLY RIDICULOUS? HORTICULTURIST NATHAN HAZLITT WOULD HAVE LAUGHED ALOUD AT THE ABSURD IDEA. BUT THEN CAME THE INCREDIBLE MOMENT HE WAS TO BE THE ASTOUNDED RECIPIENT OF *"LOVE FROM A PLANT"!*

OPEN THAT GREENHOUSE DOOR! OPEN IT RIGHT AWAY, NATHAN, OR I'LL KNOCK IT DOWN!

WON'T YOU PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE, MARTHA? I'M WORKING ON AN ABSORBING EXPERIMENT!

I'LL SHOW YOU HOW I'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE!

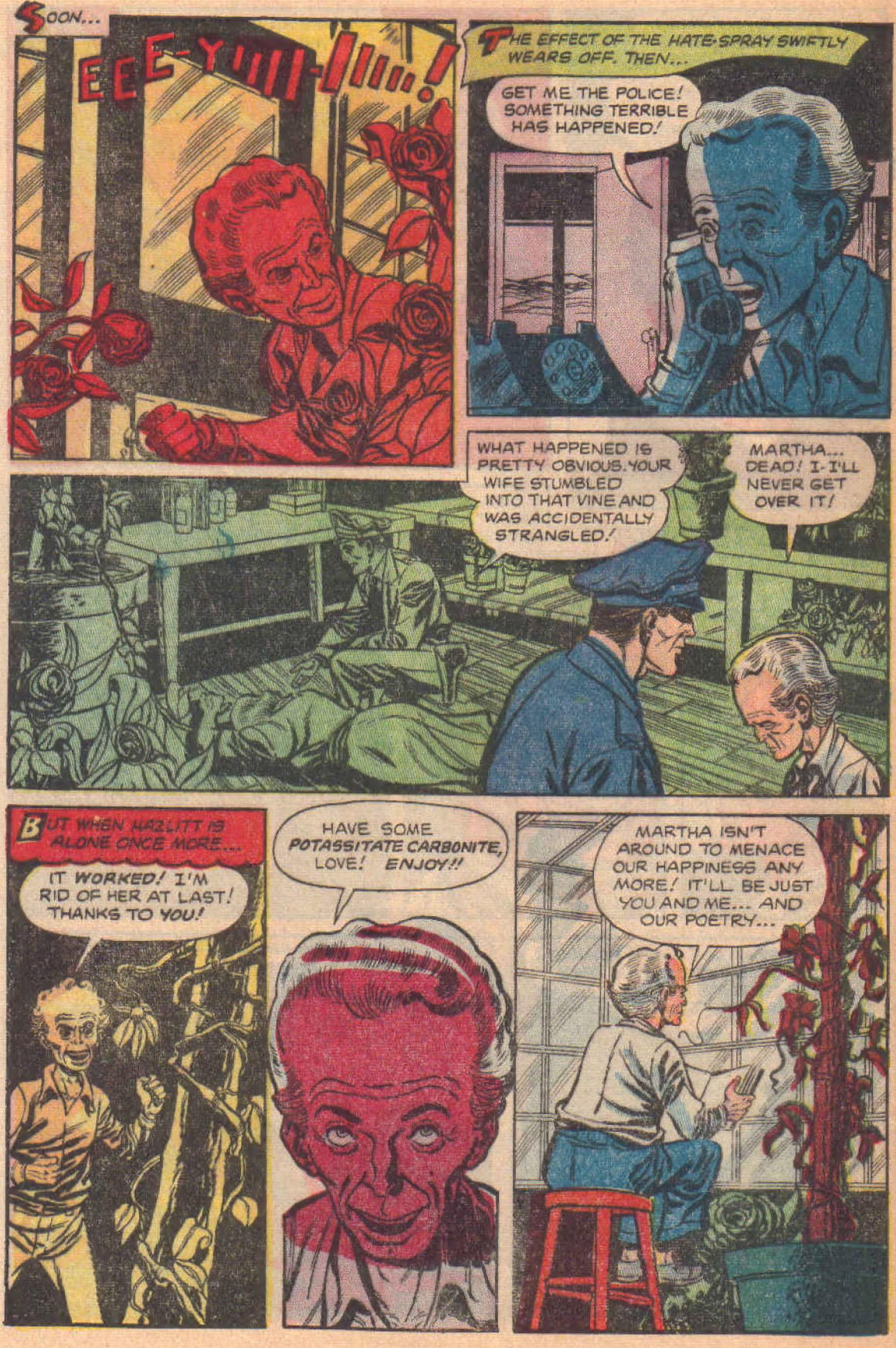
YOU AND YOUR RIDICULOUS EXPERIMENTS! YOU CARE MORE FOR THOSE SILLY FLOWERS THAN FOR YOUR OWN WIFE! YES, I'LL SHOW YOU ALL RIGHT!
WHAM!
THE DINNER'S GROWING COLD WHILE YOU TINKER WITH THESE HORRID PLANTS!
NO, MARTHA! PLEASE DON'T!
I HATE THEM! THEY'VE COME BETWEEN US! I'D LIKE TO DESTROY THEM ALL!
CRASH!
MONTHS OF LABORIOUS EXPERIMENTING... RUINED BY YOU IN A MOMENT OF ANGER... OW!
YOU'RE LUCKY I TOOK IT OUT ON THE PLANTS INSTEAD OF ON YOU!
STOP STARING AT YOUR PLATE! EAT! ARE YOU STILL THINKING ABOUT YOUR WORTHLESS PLANTS?
N-NO, DEAR.
MY PRECIOUS PLANTS ... DESTROYED BY THAT BERSERK BEHEMOTH!
AND LATER...
MARTHA DID THIS! I HATE HER!

SHE LIVES... CLUMSY, OAFISH, OBNOXIOUS... WHILE THOSE BEAUTIFUL, FRAGILE BLOSSOMS PERISH!
IT ISN'T FAIR! SHE NOT THEY SHOULD HAVE DIED!
WHAT HAVE I DONE? ACCIDENTALLY SPILLED POTASSITATE CARBONITE OVER THAT VINE! EVERYTHING IS GOING WRONG! EVERYTHING!
{SOB} I HAVEN'T A FRIEND IN THE WORLD! {SOB} NOBODY CARES ABOUT ME... NOBODY!
GENTLY, TENDERLY, A VINE-STRAND EXTENDS ITSELF TOWARD THE SOBBING HORTICULTURIST AND...
SOMETHING'S CARESSING... MY HAND...
IT'S THE VINE!!

A VINE... REACH OUT BY ITSELF?... IMPOSSIBLE!!
HAHAHA!! FOR A MOMENT I ACTUALLY THOUGHT IT STROKED MY HAND... IN SYMPATHY!
IT'S DOING IT... AGAIN!
WHY...IT'S IN LOVE WITH ME!
A PLANT... IN LOVE? RIDICULOUS! OR IS IT?
IT'S A MIRACLE OF SCIENCE! SOME MYSTERIOUS QUALITY IN THE POTASSITATE CARBONITE HAS ACTUALLY ENDOWED THIS PLANT WITH THE HUMAN EMOTION OF LOVE!

WHAT A DISCOVERY! IT'LL MAKE ME INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS!
BUT WAIT!
IF A PLANT CAN LOVE, SURELY IT CAN HATE! MAYBE IF I TRY THE THE CHEMICAL FORMULA WHICH IS THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF POTASSITATE CARBONITE...
...I MAY BE ABLE TO SWITCH AFFECTION TO LOATHING IN MY LEAFY LOVE!
YOU CAN LOVE... BUT CAN YOU HATE?
YOUR TENDRILS REACH FOR MY THROAT... YOU CAN HATE!
AND IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED...
THAT MAN! HE'S OUT IN HIS BELOVED GREENHOUSE AGAIN... WHILE I'M LEFT HERE ALONE AND NEGLECTED!
MEANWHILE...
"HERE WITH A LOAF OF BREAD BENEATH THE BOUGH, A FLASK OF WINE, A BOOK OF VERSE--AND THOU..." *
*OMAR KHAYYAM

"TWANG OUT, MY FIDDLE! SHAKE THE TWIGS! AND MAKE HER DANCE ATTENDANCE; BLOW, FLUTE, AND STIR THE STIFF-SET SPRINGS, AND SCIRRHOUS ROOTS AND TENDONS!" *
*ALFRED LORD TENNYSON
YOU LOVE ROMANTIC POETRY... AND ME... DIVINE VINE!
HOW MUCH BETTER TO BE THE BELOVED OF A QUIETLY PASSIONATE PLANT, THAN THE CRINGING SPOUSE OF A FOUL-TEMPERED FEMALE!
IF ONLY MARTHA WASN'T AROUND TO MAKE MY LIFE A MISERY! WAIT! MAYBE THERE IS A WAY!
THE HATE-SPRAY!
THE GREENHOUSE... HE'S ALWAYS IN THE GREENHOUSE! THIS TIME I'LL DO SOMETHING PERMANENT ABOUT IT!
LET ME IN THERE!
A PLEASURE!


SOON...
EEE-YUUU-UUU..!
THE EFFECT OF THE HATE-SPRAY SWIFTLY WEARS OFF. THEN...
GET ME THE POLICE! SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!
WHAT HAPPENED IS PRETTY OBVIOUS. YOUR WIFE STUMBLED INTO THAT VINE AND WAS ACCIDENTALLY STRANGLED!
MARTHA... DEAD! I-I'LL NEVER GET OVER IT!
BUT WHEN HAZLITT IS ALONE ONCE MORE...
IT WORKED! I'M RID OF HER AT LAST! THANKS TO YOU!
HAVE SOME POTASSITATE CARBONITE, LOVE! ENJOY!!
MARTHA ISN'T AROUND TO MENACE OUR HAPPINESS ANY MORE! IT'LL BE JUST YOU AND ME... AND OUR POETRY...

"I THINK YOUR EYES ARE WONDERFUL... I THINK YOUR LIPS DIVINE..."
AS HAZLITT READS, THE AMOROUS VEGETABLE REACHES RAPTUROUSLY TOWARD ITS ONE AND ONLY GREAT LOVE.
"YOU'RE AS DELICATE AS THE CHLOROPHYLL WITHIN THE CLINGING VINE..."
"YOU SCARCELY EVER CLUTCH ME... I WORSHIP EVERY... YAWRK!
DESPERATELY SOBBING, PLEADING, AND STRAINING, HAZLITT VAINLY ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE THE CRUSHING, WHIP-LIKE STRANDS...
OH, NO!! STOP TRYING TO HUG ME! STOP!! EE-YAHH!
BUT DESPITE HAZLITT'S AGONIZED SCREAMS, THE LOVE-PLANT INCREASES THE FEROCITY OF IT'S FERVENT EMBRACE!
ARNOLD HAZLITT, HORTICULTURIST EXTRAORDINARY, HAS BEEN LOVED TO DEATH... BY A PLANT!
THE END